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DE RUEHSG #1138 3581737
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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4185
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3692
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2230
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1209
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0604
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1891
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5877
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4162
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2044
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 001138

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - DECEMBER 23

Lead Stories

1. All dailies carry reports on the results of the national PSU college admissions tests, which show an enormous gap between private and public schools. Dailies also continue to highlight Wal-Mart's offer to purchase Chile's largest supermarket chain, D&S.

U.S. - Related Stories

2. The U.S. Embassy in Santiago received a suspicious white envelope through the regular mail, apparently sent from Texas, that immediately activated security procedures for anthrax in the embassy. The envelope was similar to those received by other U.S. embassies in recent months. The operation started at 1:30 pm when the embassy informed local authorities that its "security protocol" had detected a suspicious letter. There was a precautionary evacuation of the embassy's post office, and the envelope was isolated. The Carabineros [police] and the Santiago Fire Department's special HazMat unit arrived at the embassy (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 12/23). Prosecutor Ezio Braghetto instructed both to transport the envelope to the Public Safety Institute (ISP), where it was opened. The letter contained white powder and a note that was described as "a threat." The ISP will have results of tests on the white powder ready tomorrow. Washington said it would not require additional tests of the substance other than those carried out by the ISP (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 12/23).

3. Exports of Chilean smoked salmon to the United States increased 18% in October of this year, as compared to the same period in 2007 (Diario Financiero, business and financial, circ. 30,000, 12/23).

4. Tourism to Chile from the United States declined 15% from September to November 2008, as compared to the same period in 2007, according to the National Tourism Office.

5. Opinion column by Eugenio Tironi entitled "It Depends:" "There are many theories about the meaning of Obama's victory: That it marks the end of the Civil War and of the Reagan Era... That it shows how tired the American people are of their inefficient government.... All that is true, yet the most significant effect of Obama's election... is that it has restored meaning to political leadership, as expressed in his famous phrase 'Yes, We Can'.... This slogan is rooted in the strong U.S. traditional notion that it is always possible to construct something new if there is

determination, vision, hard work and unity.... 'Yes, We Can' was also a source of inspiration for millions of young people... in that it represented an alternative to the politics of cynicism, which were based on estimates and fears of new things.... Unfortunately, none of that which we are seeing in Obama is present in Chilean politics or leaders (El Mercurio, 12/23).

¶6. Editorial: "Wal-Mart's intent to buy Chile's largest supermarket chain "shows that Chile has a series of attributes that make it attractive for investment... and that Chilean entrepreneurs... are imbued with the same spirit" (Diario Financiero, 12/23).

¶7. In a letter to the editor, conservative politician Sergio O. Jarpa questions why the Government of Chile recently awarded a medal to U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, who 30 years ago was responsible for the so-called "Kennedy Amendment." Jarpa recalls that this legislation banned the sale of weapons to Chile, severely undermining its defensive capacities during the confrontation with Argentina over the Beagle Channel that brought both countries to the brink of war. "Perhaps the [Chilean] Foreign Ministry should explain this contradiction," concluded Jarpa (El Mercurio, 12/23).

Cuba

¶8. Cuba granted its formal agreement for Gabriel Gaspar as Chile's Ambassador to Havana. In government circles, it is said that Gaspar will continue to work on Bachelet's desires to further strengthen Chile's ties with Cuba (La Nacion, government-owned, editorially independent, circ. 12/23).

URBAN